

A Caltrans Program to Accelerate Project Delivery and Improve Design Excellence

Caltrans delivers a huge range of projects every year, from the simplest to the most complex and controversial – more than 800 in 1999/2000, worth \$2.5 billion. Developing a project entails as many as several hundred activities and involves dozens of interests and agencies. A myriad of environmental and other laws and regulations governs the process, which ordinarily takes years.

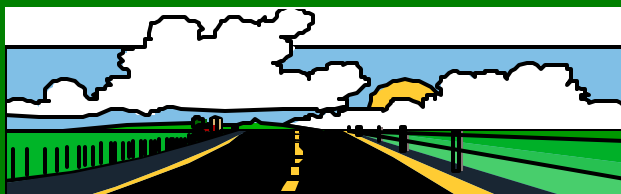
But Caltrans is able to speed delivery of certain high-priority projects when funding is assured. For instance, the department has redirected staff and resources to deliver more than \$250 million in storm damage projects over the two past years. As another example, in 1998-99, Caltrans used resources from future years to advance about \$180 million of projects. Most of these required no purchase of rights of way and were exempt from detailed environmental study.

The legislature has passed AB 1012 to develop faster ways to develop projects (for information see <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/ab1012/ab1012.htm>). The current budget provides funds to accelerate projects or build a shelf of ready-to-go projects if resources become available. To respond, Capital Programs has developed the **Accel/Excel** program, consisting of dozens of process improvements proven under use. *This name has been chosen to emphasize that it describes real ways to speed projects that meet rigorous standards of excellence.*

This newsletter will convey information to you about **Accel/Excel** improvements as they are tested and found effective. Each Accel/Excel newsletter, providing a summary, description of the problem being addressed, implementation steps and guides to appropriate policies and procedures, will be E-Mailed to you. Check the Internet at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/ab1012/ab1012.htm> for information on other acceleration efforts.

Here's one:

Say You Had A No-Brainer Project With Just One Trouble Spot



You may not need to do an Environmental Impact Report or full Negative Dec. The Environmental Program has worked out a *shortened* format for

a Negative Declaration that allows you to use the California Environmental Quality Act checklist for the resource issues other than the trouble spot.

Preparation of this "focused" Negative Declaration should save both time and personnel hours. An example of a project on which such a document would be useful is one that has a hazardous material site on the Cortese List but is otherwise without major environmental issues.

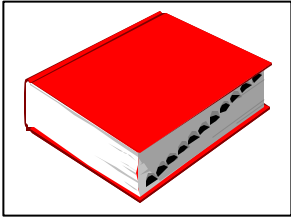
Contact your District Environmental Office for additional information.

Here's Another:

Simplify, Simplify, Simplify...Accel/Excel teams have identified areas in the design process that can be simplified for many projects. Examples include: reducing the number of plan sheets by eliminating or combining those that have little or no value with others; incorporating information that historically has been shown on the plans into the specifications, and minimizing or eliminating field surveys for certain simpler projects such as overlays on existing pavement.

To find out more about how to use these techniques, get in touch with your Headquarters Reviewer in your district office at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/liaison/liaison.htm>.

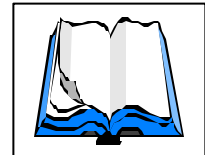
Caltrans and its industry partners have developed a Field Guide and a 12-minute video for Caltrans and contractor project personnel that shows how to partner successfully, defines responsibilities and conveys Caltrans' and the construction industry's commitment to partnering. Becoming a partner with a contractor improves project delivery to the benefit of both parties by maintaining open lines of communication, establishing a way to resolve conflicts at the lowest possible level, and setting goals and objectives for the project. Learn more about partnering or get a copy of the Caltrans Field Guide to Partnering by contacting Osama Hassoun in Headquarters Construction at 8-464-6796.



Caltrans can now acquire property for Rights of Way for projects *not* in the State Transportation Improvement Program before environmental approval under certain conditions: the district has to conclude informally that the project will have no significant impact on the environment and that a minimal environmental document such as a Categorical Exclusion or Negative Declaration will suffice. Acquisitions *must* be voluntary (no resolutions of necessity!), and the design must have proceeded to a point that Design can supply requirements for appraisal maps and deeds. And, *muy importante*: you must document your decision in the project file. To learn more, see your district Office of Right of Way.



Expedited Project Study Report...SB 45 allows Caltrans to program support costs only for projects on which Project Report/Environmental Document and Plans, Specs and Estimates will not be completed within four years. Working with the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans has developed a "PSR - Project Development Support" – an expedited version of the traditional Project Study Report. This report provides information on which to program support costs only for the Project Report/Environmental Document phase. It cannot be used to program capitol costs, but could be used for support costs for the PS&E and Construction phases. It should take less time than a PSR since it is used only to estimate the PYs and schedule for the PR & ED work. Realize, though, because it is used on complicated projects, it may take as long as a year to develop. For additional information, contact Design and Local Programs in Headquarters, Mary Beth Herriott at 8-453-4166, or Marcia Arrant at 8-653-5510, or either by E-Mail.



Improve Project Delivery Training. Because of local agency difficulties in responding to State and federal project development and environmental requirements, Caltrans is developing training courses for local agency employees as they begin producing each element of a local project. It's "on time", to assure that valuable knowledge is not lost between the training sessions and when the work begins. This training is designed to ensure that local agency employees have the knowledge, skills and tools to produce each project element successfully. Training is currently being conducted for federal aid projects. Additional training will be announced as development is completed. Caltrans will continually assess the training to ensure that it meets its goals. For more information, contact your District Local Programs Training Coordinator.



Pavement Rehab and Safety Project Speedup – The California Transportation Commission will now allow Caltrans to start pavement rehabilitation and safety projects without formal action by the Commission. The Commission requires an annual report so it can audit the department's use of the delegation. But the action also allows the department to deliver non-controversial projects at least one month faster, by not requiring them to go through the Commission's vote process. For additional information, contact Headquarters Programming, John Van Berkel at 8-464-4327 or Bob Engelmann at 8-454-5541, or either by E-Mail.